Labour and Nationality in Soviet Central Asia by Nancy Lubin
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possibility of war, the interest of the Federal Republic in doing so has a character which is different. Apart from the physical devastation that this would cause, it would result for the Germans in a fratricidal war. The French perspective is different. Professor Legvold quotes the testimony of Erwin Weit, Gomulka's interpreter, who has Brezhnev describing De Gaulle as a sly old fox who was aiming at weakening American predominance in Europe but who was, of course, an enemy of the U.S.S.R. While Legvold doubts that Brezhnev ever really put it this way, it does correspond to Soviet thinking on their relations with the super-powers. Nevertheless France's dependence on NATO remains great and indeed has enabled it to play its independent policy.

In theory at least, the Soviets have alternative areas which they can influence and where they can win friends. In fact their relations with the communist parties of western Europe have been anything but happy. Although the spark of life has gone out of the Eurocommunist movement the influence of the Soviets over these parties is imperfect and operates only sporadically. Relations with the non-communist left have never been cordial although in security perspectives there has sometimes been agreement.

This book my be recommended to anyone wishing to gain a sophisticated insight into Soviet thinking and policy.

London H. HANAK

Lubin, Nancy. *Labour and Nationality in Soviet Central Asia.* Macmillan, London and Basingstoke, in association with St Antony's College, Oxford, 1985. xxi + 305 pp. Appendixes. Tables. Notes. Index. £25.00.

IN THE last fifty years, and especially since the death of Stalin, the growth of population in Soviet Central Asia has been extremely rapid. This has been due to significant immigration by Slavs from other parts of the U.S.S.R. and continued high rates of natural increase among the indigenous population. The immigrant population is employed disproportionately in manufacturing industry and in technical–managerial positions; it is overwhelmingly urban. Central Asians are much more likely to work in agriculture or services, both sectors with below-average earnings in the Soviet Union; the native population also tends to live in rural areas or in small traditional towns.

These features have characterized Central Asia for the past twenty years or more. And one might imagine that they would have been the source of considerable inter-communal friction, if not proto-nationalist disaffection. In this book, however, Nancy Lubin contends that such is not the case. She argues that ethnic separation and stratification are as much the result of differences in culture and preference as they are a reflection of discrimination by a dominant neo-colonial system. She also claims that official statistics exaggerate the amount of inequality and understate living standards through their neglect of private sources of income. While the authorities in Moscow may not have wholly approved of the direction taken

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by the evolution of Central Asian society, they have made only half-hearted efforts to change its course. As a result, central policy seems to have been unable to bring about any radical change in the economic and social structure of the region.

Nancy Lubin is a young American scholar whose studies have afforded her a better opportunity to collect the relevant information, than is available to most western students of the region. She speaks one of the local languages, in addition to Russian; and she was fortunate enough to spend the 1978–79 academic year at the University of Tashkent. This enabled her to interview local administrators, to consult unpublished dissertations, to acquire a feel for the reality behind the forms of words used in official Soviet accounts. As a result, this book contains valuable insights; it contains much detailed information (about the ethnic composition of enrolments at different educational establishments, for example) that is simply not published in official sources.

Lubin's analysis will contribute to a more empirical (and less ideological) conception of Soviet society and its regional diversity. It forms a useful antidote to the fissiparous vision conveyed by Carrère d'Encausse's *L'Empire éclaté*. It should be read by all interested students.

And yet I fear that Lubin's vision, too, is flawed. Or rather, her treatment of oral evidence fails to convince. The claim that Uzbeks are not 'disadvantaged', are not excluded from positions of greatest material reward, but choose to work in agriculture and the services sector, rests on the assertion that such occupations afford the best opportunities for participation in the so-called second economy. It is also asserted that such participation can be extremely lucrative. Since much of this participation is of dubious legality, it is imperfectly reflected in official statistics. Lubin judges its scale by the tales that she was told, evidence that, by its nature, is not available for independent confirmation. (In what follows, I confine discussion to questions of the second economy; but analysis of other aspects of Central Asian society is undermined by similar flaws.)

Sometimes, the social scientist has no choice but to use such anecdotal evidence; it may be all that is available. But, he or she should approach it with a great deal of circumspection. It should be recognized that the informants themselves may not be all that well informed; that anecdotes may convey more about the prejudices of the informant than the 'objective' conditions they purport to describe; that anecdotes often focus on the atypical, or causes of envy and resentment. (One only has to contrast the image of council-house tenants that one obtains from listening to the gossip of the middle classes with that derived from an analysis of the *General Household Survey* to appreciate the importance of these factors.)

The participant-observer must, therefore, treat each anecdote and the pieces of information it contains with caution. He or she must ask, continually: why am I being told this story; can my informant reasonably be expected to *know* such information or is this only hearsay. And when he or she uses it to support social analysis, readers ought to be told about the emotional background to the occasion on which the anecdote was collected — and something about the social identity of the informant. But this Lubin

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signally fails to do. We are not informed who tells her about the high earnings that shoe-salesmen receive through kickbacks and other peculation; we are not informed of the reason why she was told of the aggregate value of bribes for admission to the Tashkent Medical Institute in 1978–79 — nor how her informant could possibly *know* such a figure. And the book itself gives no hint that Lubin is aware of these problems with her so-called evidence or regards them as important. As a result, it is impossible for the reader to assess the weight of the evidence that supports her interpretation. This must devalue her analysis.

Colchester ALASTAIR MCAULEY

Tarniewski, Marek. *Płonie Komitet (Grudzień 1970–Czerwiec 1976)*. Instytut literacki, Paris, 1982. 198 pp. F 65.00.

Kwaśniewski, Jerzy. *Society and Deviance in Communist Poland: Attitudes towards Social Control*. Introduction by Adam Podgórecki. Translated by Margaret Watson. Berg, Leamington Spa, 1984. 210 pp. Tables. Bibliography. £20.00.

Staniszkis, Jadwiga. *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution*. Edited by Jan T. Gross, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1984. xii + 353 pp. Index. £23.20.

DISSENT is a key topic in the study of East European politics and society; indeed to ignore its existence when following developments in working class or intelligentsia politics, in church-state relations or even in policy areas such as education, health, and the economy, is to leave part of the story untold. Some would go so far as to argue that dissent is the only true manifestation of political activity in these societies. Obviously, Poland provides the case that illustrates this *par excellence*. None the less, caution is required as the significance of different dissenting voices and movements is variable on the scale between loyal opposition and the anti-system underground. Whether such dissent comes to our attention depends not only upon how well it is organized domestically, but also upon the contacts made with international organizations and the western media. All too often the benefit of a highly sympathetic ear in the media can lead Western observers to ascribe a status to individual dissidents far beyond their effect in domestic politics. On the other hand, ever since the Helsinki conference in 1975, East European governments have hesitated before resorting immediately to repression. An important vehicle in the West for dissident intellectual voices is the weekly magazine *Kultura* published by the Instytut Literackie in Paris since 1963. This organization provided a means of publication for literature and historical materials, and has also been used to air the observations of many who are no longer inside the Eastern bloc, and indeed have long been on the outside. *Płonie Komitet* is a collection of twenty-one essays by someone in such a situation. It covers a wide range of subjects (international relations, cultural affairs, the economy, the Church, etc.) but the loose connecting thread seems to be that despite the repression of intellectuals and students in March 1968, intellectual life has somehow

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